
Chapter 7

OPERATIONS PLAN



Figure 7.1: Mown open space at Chestnut Hill Driveway and Saint Thomas More Road (2005)

Introduction

This RMP has outlined the existing management resources at Chestnut Hill Reservation, including the types of users, variety of use, park infrastructure, personnel, and other resources supporting the management of the park. Resources and staffing vary from year to year and from season to season. Seasonal staff assignments are made in the spring, but may not provide adequate personnel to implement the recommendations of this RMP.

The purpose of this Operations Plan is to identify the resources needed to manage Chestnut Hill Reservation. The RMP proposes looking at a multiple tiered Operations Plan:

- **Level 1:** Maintaining the reservation mostly as it is done currently;
- **Level 2:** Developing a more intense operation through the addition of 1 or 2 full time staff; and
- **Level 3:** Developing intense operations such as a full-time ranger; and/or multiple full time and part time staff.

DCR Management Structure

The Department of Conservation and Recreation manages recreational facilities that fall under the Division of State

Parks and Recreation and the Division of Urban Parks and Recreation. Within each division are smaller management units such as regions and districts. Chestnut Hill Reservation falls under the Urban Parks, South Region and is contained within the West District. This district includes such parks as Cutler Park (Needham), Wilson Mountain (Dedham), Hammond Pond Reservation (Newton), Veterans Memorial Pool (Waltham), Elm Bank Reservation (Dover/Wellesley), and Lost Pond (Brookline). A more detailed listing of all facilities in this district is in Chapter 3. The management for this area is based out of the West District office located at 12 Brainard Street in Hyde Park.

It is important to note that the assignment of staff and allocation of resources (funding, materials, etc.) is based on regional management priorities. With the current levels of regional staffing and funding less than sufficient to support all of the facilities within the region, management decisions are often based on levels of visitation, recreational use (swimming and camping vs. walking), and public safety. Chestnut Hill Reservation is a relatively small park, offering primarily passive recreation, which results in a low priority for staffing and funding. Although the Reilly Pool is staffed during the swimming season, staff are assigned to the pool only and do not provide services to the Reservation as a whole.

Management Levels and Associated Costs

1. Level 1 - Baseline

Level 1 management is the management of the facility in its current condition, with no change to the visitor experience. At Chestnut Hill Reservation this includes walking and running on existing pathways, passive birding and arts enjoyment, and no programmed interpretive services or regular daily presence of DCR

personnel. At a minimum, seasonal maintenance includes lawn mowing, vegetation control and trash pick-up (at least weekly).

In the current system of regional/district allocation of staff and resources, there is no dedicated full time staff or guaranteed seasonal staff for the Reservation; so the existing staffing does not support the Level 1 management of the Reservation. The FY 2005 level of staffing is the minimum required to achieve this goal.

Level 1 Staffing

Number	Staff description	Time
1 (District)	Park Supervisor	Year Round
1 (District)	Park Ranger	Year round
1 long-term	Seasonal Forest & Parks Supervisor I	May 15 to Oct. 31 (24 wks)
1 short-term	Seasonal Laborer	Memorial Day to Labor Day (14wks)
2 short-term	summer workers	12 weeks of work

2. Level 2 – Improved

Under the level 2 management of Chestnut Hill Reservation, DCR staff work toward recapturing the character of the historic landscape. With a guarantee of qualified seasonal or short term staff, the Park Supervisor could plan annual projects to address the recommendations of this RMP. Annual efforts could as an

example include pathway surface repairs, vista management, invasive plant control, and limited planting.

To achieve Level 2 management, skilled seasonal staff must be assigned to Chestnut Hill Reservation every year. The Park Supervisor or District Supervisor must be informed of seasonal assignments well in advance to allow time for planning projects, obtaining supplies, and scheduling equipment.

Level 2 Staffing

Number	Staff description	Time
1 (District)	Park Supervisor	Year round
1 (District)	Park Ranger	Year round
1 Full time	Forest & Parks Supervisor I	Year round
2 Long-term	Seasonal Forest & Parks Supervisor I	April 1 to October 31 (26 wks)
2 Short-term	Seasonal Laborer	Memorial Day to Labor Day (14wks)

3. Level 3 - Enhanced

Chestnut Hill Reservation is a popular recreational landscape with great potential to showcase historic

resources, as well as, educate the public. Once baseline management is mastered, DCR could strive toward creating an urban gem at Chestnut Hill Reservation, with visitor services/experiences on par with the significance

of the parks' unique historic features. Referring to Chapter 5, a capital program focusing on the adaptive reuse of historic Gatehouse #1 would establish a contact point for visitors; create opportunities for interpretation, and possible partnership with local organizations. In addition, the restoration of Chestnut Hill Driveway could recapture parkland, restore and retain historic views, and

recreate the driveway experience, so integral to the original concept of the park. This level of management is dependent on the implementation of a number of capital improvements along with an increase in year-round staff; specifically a dedicated Interpretive Ranger, as well as, additional staff to maintain paths, staff Gatehouse #1, and to develop and implement the interpretive programs.

Level 3 Staffing

Number	Staff description	Time
1 (District)	Park Supervisor	Year round
1 (District)	Park Ranger	Year round
1 Full time	Forest & Parks Supervisor I	Year round
1 Full time	Laborer I	Year round
2 long-term	Seasonal Forest & Parks Supervisor I	April 1 to October 31 (26 wks)
3 short-term	Seasonal Laborer	Memorial Day to Labor Day (14wks)
1 short-term	Interpretive Ranger	Memorial Day to Labor Day (14 wks)

Maintenance Zones

The RMP organized the site into geographic maintenance zones based on the character of the area and the tasks required in each zone. Five of these zones are currently maintained by DCR and two are currently maintained by others. Refer to the Maintenance Plan in Appendix F for the boundaries of the maintenance zones. Zones currently maintained by DCR:

- Zone 1** Mown Lawn
- Zone 2** Trees over grass
- Zone 3** Woodland
- Zone 4** Reilly Memorial Pool and Rink
- Zone 5** Edge of water

Zones currently maintained by others:

- Zone 6** Saint Thomas More Road edge at Boston College/Evergreen Cemetery
- Zone 7** Chestnut Hill Reservoir Community Gardens

Each geographic zone area could require a variety of maintenance tasks such as mowing and trimming, mulching beds and weeding, litter removal, tree and shrub maintenance, removal of invasive species, graffiti removal, reporting of current conditions, debris and trash clean up, and maintenance of pathways, sidewalks, and

parking areas. The densely wooded area north of Chestnut Hill Driveway and bordering Wade Street and Evergreen Cemetery should be managed as a buffer zone protecting and enhancing the Reservation.

The following maintenance tasks are recommended to maintain Chestnut Hill Reservation. The work of the in-house crews may be supplemented by specialized work under DCR maintenance contracts (i.e. arborist services).

- **General Maintenance**
 - Mowing (lawn and open areas)
 - Watering
 - Weeding
 - Soil testing
 - Trash barrel pick-up
 - Debris clean up
 - Fall leaf collection
 - Snow removal
 - Sweeping pathways, roadways, and parking areas
 - Graffiti removal
 - Special events
- **Horticulture**
 - Prune and trim shrubs

- Special planting projects
- Ornamental pruning of small trees
- Weeding and plant identification
- Watering all newly planted areas
- Fertilize trees and shrubs
- Install/replace shrubs
- Seasonal beautification
- Mulching plant beds
- Insect control
- **Structure**
 - Repair, paint fencing
 - Repair, paint benches
 - Repair, paint wood trim on Gatehouse #1 (if under DCR control)
 - Masonry wall and pathway improvements
 - Maintenance of signage
 - Graffiti removal and masonry cleaning
- **Forestry (Zone 2 & 3 only)**
 - Tree and stump removal
 - Structural and safety pruning
 - Tree trunk protection
 - Tree replacements
 - Fertilize tree areas
 - Pest and insect control
 - Tree tagging and installation
 - Emergency tree response
 - Removal of invasive vegetation

General maintenance standards for specific tasks (turf, woodland, etc.) are included in Appendix E.

Maintenance Agreements

Both Boston College and the City of Boston currently provide maintenance services along Saint Thomas More Road. If a formal maintenance agreement can be negotiated between the parties, these partnerships could decrease demands on park staff and facilitate good management of the Reservation as a whole.

Operational Costs

Because DCR does not maintain a separate operational budget for Chestnut Hill Reservation, maintenance costs are difficult to measure. The 1999 *Maintenance Plan for the Muddy River Parks of the Emerald Necklace, Muddy Rivers Restoration Project* outlined a prototype methodology for calculating costs based on maintenance programs at the Arnold Arboretum, Prospect Park in

Brooklyn and other prominent historic parks. If this methodology were applied to Chestnut Hill Reservation, maintenance costs would range from approximately \$70,000 for Level 1, \$105,000 at Level 2 to \$140,000 for Level 3. More information on this methodology can be found in Appendix E.

Capital Costs

Capital costs are included in Chapter 6 Implementation Plan.

Memorial and Commemorative Gifts DCR Reservations

DCR is developing a policy on Memorial and Commemorative Gifts in its parks. The policy is now under review by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

Park Event Permitting

Certain uses of DCR parkland require a permit, including reserving parkland for a special use; sporting events, concerts, road races, walk-a-thons, outings and charity events, and any commercial activity on DCR parkland (which may also require a license). There are four different types of DCR park permits – Recreational Use Permit, Special Use Permit, Permit Agreement, and License Agreement.

- **A Recreational Use permit** is for timed, daily or seasonal “intended” use such as a camping permit or skating rink ice rentals. These permits are requested and Issued at a DCR regional, district or facility office, with approximately 4,000 issued each year.
- **A Special Use Permit** is for one day to one year intermittent events. They are requested and issued at the Boston office and require liability insurance. They may also require labor reimbursement, trash cost reimbursement and various other permits from state, federal or local agencies. The following activities require Special Use Permits:
 - Small group outings with amplification, tents or amusements
 - Large group outings & special events
 - Charity events
 - Aquatic events
 - Parkway usage

- DCR facility or equipment usage
- **A Permit Agreement** covers activities lasting 5 days or more and up to 5 years. Such agreements are subject to state procurement law and are solicited through the DCR's Boston office. Permit agreements require approval of the DCR Commissioner. The following activities require Permit Agreements:
 - Concessions
 - Transportation
 - Communication technology
- **License Agreements** can be issued for long and short term use of DCR parkland for sustained types of uses. Requested and issued through the Boston office, these agreements require approval from the DCR Commissioner and may be subject to public hearing. The following uses require License Agreement:
 - Boat houses
 - Utility occupancy

Other Agreements

DCR may also enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for activities related to Friends Groups, stewardship of land, and municipal and government agencies. MOUs and MOAs are issued by the DCR in Boston and require the approval from the DCR Commissioner.

For all other agreements at Chestnut Hill Reservation, the DCR Permit Program allows for specialized events. Because the park is a historic landscape, careful attention should be paid to the impacts of proposed activities on the landscape – specifically lawns, trees, and pathways. The Permit Program should include provisions for protection of resources during events and restoration of resources following events. The Program should also assess the need to include fees to offset costs of labor associated with resource protection.

